

## The Impact of Career Development on Employee Performance in the Civil Service Sector: A Nigerian Context

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### ABSTRACT

The performance of every organization is determined by its ability to manage organizational resources, and among these resources, human resources are considered the key to the performance of the organization. The efficiency with which an organization can perform will depend to a large extent on how its human resources can be managed and utilized. That is why this study focuses on the impact of career development on employee performance in Nigeria's civil service, a study of Ebonyi State Civil Service, South East Nigeria. Using qualitative and quantitative research approaches, a sample of 382 respondents comprising 36 senior management staff, 91 heads of department and supervisors and 265 operational staff was drawn from 3009 employees of the State Civil Service. A purposive sampling technique was used to reach the respondents. Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were the instruments for primary data collection and articles from journals, government gazettes and documents formed the secondary sources. Data was presented and analysed with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 and Microsoft Excel. The hypothesis was tested using Chi-Square inferential statistics. Findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between career development and employees' job performance, that career development has moderately impacted employee behavioural competencies (attitude to work) in the Ebonyi State Civil Service within the period under review and that insufficient funding and poor salary packages have affected career development and employee performance in Ebonyi State Civil Service, from 2015-2022. Key recommendations include that Ebonyi State Civil Service Commission should prioritize and enhance career development opportunities within the civil service to enable the employees to benefit from and utilize them to maintain positive work attitudes and boost overall organizational performance, that Ebonyi State Civil Service should provide adequate, transparent and fair promotion opportunities based on merit and performance and that Ebonyi State Civil Service should explore alternative funding sources, seek partnerships or grants, and prioritize budget allocations for employee training and resources.

### KEYWORDS

Career development; Employee performance; Civil service; Service delivery

## 1. Introduction

Career development and employee performance are major strategic considerations for all

organizations regardless of size, sector, profile, or market (Eunice & Hazel, 2016). This is because career development of an employee is an inseparable part of the system of human resource management of any organization (Andrius & Vladimiras, 2014). And as organizations are established to achieve some specific goals using materials, financial and human resources, most of the organizations have realized that it is their human resources (that is, people who give their energy, talent, creativity, and effort to the organization to maintain the existence of an organization) that are the key to the success and even the lasting success of the business (Eunice & Hazel, 2016). Human resources are regarded as one of the most significant assets. The efficiency with which an organization can perform will depend, to a large extent, on how its human resources can be managed and utilized (Onah, 2008), and organizational success significantly hinges on employee performance (Sutrisno, 2012; Alkahtani, 2013).

Managers manage the employees in organizations to ensure that their potential, skills, and abilities are harnessed effectively and efficiently to achieve organizational goals and objectives. To achieve organizational goals, organizations lay out the steps required from Point A to Point B within Time Frame C and plan how they will accomplish those steps (Darren, 2021). These steps usually start with (a) planning, that is, the identification of workforce requirements; (b) recruitment, that is to invite and solicit applications according to the invitations made to the desirable candidates; (c) selection in which solicited applications are screened out, and suitable candidates are appointed as per the requirements (d) orientation and placement (e) performance evaluation (f) training and development (g) promotion and transfer.

The employees, having been absorbed, feel motivated and committed if they are provided with the opportunities to grow at work, the chance to advance beyond the current positions they are in, and the opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills to fulfil their career goals and contribute to achieving organizational goals (Darren, 2021). The employees usually have good performance if their organizations make efforts to meet their career development needs (Luh-Putu & Sagung, 2020).

A career includes all of the actions and responsibilities one undertakes during their life, such as education, training, paid and unpaid job, raising a family, volunteering, participating in leisure activities, and more (Gyansah & Guantai, 2018). Individuals must develop greater self-awareness in choosing a career and discover their interests, abilities, values, and personality styles. After that, they locate an organization and learn more about its roles and responsibilities. Career development is a continuous process through which an individual employee progresses through stages characterized by special or unique issues, tasks, and themes. Career development for employees is an inextricable feature of every public service system (Kekeocha et al., 2022). In organizations, career development involves two stages: (a) career planning, which includes activities performed by individual employees under the assistance and supervision of supervisors and line managers to evaluate their abilities and skills to create a practical career strategy, and (b) career management which focuses on all that an organization does to promote employee career development and is the strategy or approach used to carry out the plan (Gyansah & Guantai, 2018).

In career growth, factors such as education, training and development, promotion, personal skills, job attainment, job survival, and a healthy attitude are critical factors that determine career success in an organization (Tunde & Majekodunmi, 2022). Career development has been recognized globally as a crucial requirement, which influences the career growth opportunities that remain a key determinant of employees' organizational productivity, irrespective of the organization's type or nature (Delbari et al., 2021). Employees who believe their employers care more about their professional development and offer ways to achieve their unique career goals while advancing the organization are more dedicated, committed, and engaged (Agbionu et al., 2018). Therefore, every employee must be allowed to develop their career to motivate them to perform better by improving or developing good performance to get career development opportunities (Rosalia, 2015). Career development programmes such as training

provide employees with an ongoing mechanism to improve their skills and knowledge that can lead to mastery of their current job, promotion, and transfer to a new or different position. Career development directly impacts the entire organization by improving employees' morale, career satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and responsiveness in meeting departmental and organizational objectives. This means that employees must learn continuously to meet new developments and legislation in their field (Mihaela, 2015).

Employees, the critical element of an organization, determine its success or failure through their performance. Employee performance is the rate at which employees can complete their assigned tasks. Employee performance can be measured in terms task performance and behavioural performance. That is, the ability of employees to perform tasks, provide quality service, and achieve set targets, as well as timely delivery of services and employee attitudes toward work. Developing the capacity and capability of employees fundamentally impacts service efficiency, effectiveness, target achievement, and employee output in the organization (Efenji, 2023).

In modern organizations, individuals who want to maintain their employability have to be willing to grow their careers by learning and developing their skills regularly. Appropriately-developed employees are the core of organizational development and the ones who determine whether the organization succeeds or fails (Sinha, 2020). Making solid career development programs and communicating the significance of the programs created by the organization for managerial and professional staff and operational, middle, and lower managers can increase employee performance. Employees with a career path and progression are more satisfied with the organization (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2015). These workers also have strong trust and support from their employers. Compared to individuals who feel they lack a professional career path, employees who have benefited from career development programs frequently indicate a lower desire to shift professions. The higher the employee is allowed to develop their career, the higher the employee satisfaction, which in turn will have a better job impact. Employees will work well and have high job satisfaction when placed in positions that match their interests and abilities. Thus, career growth opportunities remain key determinants of employee and organizational performance, irrespective of the organization's type or nature (Delbari et al., 2021).

The civil service can be described as the main instrument by which the government implements and oversees public policies and initiatives (Afolabi, 2011). Precisely, the civil service is made up of workers in government ministries and other agencies that are expected to provide continuity in governance, serve as a repository of knowledge and experience of the practices and procedures of governance, and protect the public interest (Anieti et al., 2021). In Nigeria, the endeavour to improve the civil service's efficiency and effectiveness has long attracted the attention of succeeding administrations by establishing the Federal and State Civil Service Commissions. The Civil Service Commission serves as a regulatory body for the civil service and handles the human resource management function (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2015). The formulation and implementation of government policies and programs, which are the significant roles of civil service, may not be adequately achieved if the employees' career is not correctly developed. Civil service, which should be a substantial tool for the nation's development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1997; Salaiu, 2001), is now faced with a high rate of poor service delivery. There is a high incidence of absenteeism, lack of employee morale, and commitment towards achieving the organizational goals. Workers frequently threaten to go on strikes.

In Ebonyi state, the civil service was established after the creation of the state in 1996 by the late Gen. Sani Abacha's Administration, and the state then was regarded as having a low educational background. The state civil service inherited inadequate and underqualified workers who were left over from the old Enugu and Abia state services (Nwokwu, 2015) and was faced with many challenges, including a lack of adequately qualified, trained, capable, experienced, and skilled workforce to carry out the affairs of civil service effectively (Nwambe, 2011). This situation plunged the state civil service

into administrative backwardness and gross poor employee performance, such as the untimely implementation of public policies, the inability of the employees to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to perform tasks, poor record management, and poor quality service delivery. In a bid to improve on these unfortunate situations, there has been a lot of transformation and innovation such as the recruitment of more workers to fill the vacancies that exist, introducing career development programmes such as training, offering of educational opportunities to enable employees to acquire the requisite certificates and the deployment of employees for mentorship from one successive government to another. These transformation and innovation efforts are supposed to improve employee performance in the state civil service. However, whether these efforts have achieved the expected results is not yet determined, and this has propelled the researcher to go into this study.

In advanced countries, adequate career development opportunities have started gaining more attention from various organizations as a means through which organization improves their employee performances. Career development begins from the initial stage of identifying an employee's career path and setting career development goals through job analysis and regular evaluation of employee performance through performance appraisal. In modern organizations, even though an individual owns a career, an organization can actively participate in employee career development through its career development system/plan (Andrius & Vladimiras, 2014). In the civil service system, a professional civil servant should provide the government with day-to-day advice on formulating policies, help implement public policies, and manage and deliver the services for which the government is responsible. Regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, race, or class, the process of hiring, assigning, compensating, promoting, and training civil servants in a position is guided by the principles of professionalism based on the competence, performance, and levels rank set for the job as well as other objective conditions (Santi et al., 2015). Organizations can recruit, place, promote, pay, train, and develop people who can originate, create, and innovate in a meritocratic and adequate manner by using career development systems that are appropriately structured, and implement new ideas to the highest levels of management, allowing the organization to adapt to a rapidly changing environment (Higgins & Dillon, 2017).

In the civil service of a developing nation like Nigeria, and Ebonyi State especially, career development is expected to be accorded the desired attention for it to drive employees to higher levels of job and behavioural performance, especially in terms of improved quality of service delivery; improvement on the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to perform tasks, timely implementation of public policies and programs; efficient records management, discipline, punctuality, commitment to assigned duties and responsibilities; loyalty to the organization, effectiveness, among others. Career development is also expected to motivate workers into optimal performance, as a motivated worker is happy and dedicated.

However, rather than improved job and behavioural performances, the reverse appears in the Ebonyi State Civil Service. Civil servants in the state lament inadequate participation in career development training, poor salary packages, salary cuts without justifiable reasons, denial of promotion when due with its associated entitlements, abuse of established civil service rules, harassment, and intimidation. These processes of human resources development, which are the critical components of career development, seem inadequate and inappropriate. Training programmes are often not funded and sometimes provided at the management's discretion at any time within the year without due recourse to specific areas of staff training needs. These states of affairs seem to create mutual distrust between the employers of labour and the employees.

Unfortunately, rather than discipline, punctuality in duty, commitment to the organizational goals and objectives, dedication to responsibility, accountability, loyalty, honesty, courage, courtesy, cooperation, and tact, the reverse appears to be the case as civil servants seemingly exhibit unhealthy and unruly behaviour in the workplace such as delays in the accomplishment of the task, inability to

use ICT to perform tasks, truancy, absenteeism, disloyalty, lack of dedication and other acts that constitute employee misconducts. The Nigerian public service, according to Oyedele (2015), has been marked by unfavourable attitudes and characteristics like insensitivity to citizens' complaints, tardiness, obvious negligence, inexcusable incompetence, unchecked corruption, favouritism, mediocre performance, and an overall careless attitude toward work.

Arising from the above, effective career development appears to have eluded employees in the Ebonyi State Civil Service, undermining genuine efforts at the job and behavioural performances. Previous studies paid little attention to these issues, especially in Ebonyi State. Hence, this study became imperative to investigate the effect of career development on employee job and behavioural performances in the study area. The overarching goal of this research is to examine the influence of career development on employee performance within the context of Ebonyi State civil service in South-East Nigeria. The study aims to address specific facets of this relationship over the period from 2015 to 2022. The first objective involves investigating the correlation between career development initiatives and employee job performance within the Ebonyi State Civil Service. The focus is on identifying patterns and trends that may highlight the impact of career development programs on the overall effectiveness and efficiency of employees during the specified timeframe. Additionally, the research seeks to understand how career development has shaped employees' behavioral competencies, particularly their attitude towards work, in the same state civil service over the given period. Lastly, the study explores the role of funding and salary packages in influencing both career development opportunities and employee performance within the Ebonyi State Civil Service from 2015 to 2022.

In summary, this research has a dual objective: firstly, to analyze the relationship between career development and job performance; and secondly, to investigate the impact of career development, funding, and salary packages on employee behavioral competencies and overall performance within the specific context of Ebonyi State civil service from 2015 to 2022.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Career development**

A person's career is defined as the all-purpose path or evolution of their professional accomplishments, which is their life's job and the source of their income, according to Holtom and Inderrienden (2016). Generally speaking, a person's career is considered to be a pattern of their lifelong work-related experiences (Firman, 2021). A career, according to Kekeocha et al. (2022), is an occupation or a vocation that typically requires specialized training or formal education and is regarded as a person's life work.

Veitzhal Rival (2003) in Novita et al. (2022) defined career development as increasing an individual's ability to achieve the desired career. According to Firman (2021), career development involves preparing people to take on new or greater responsibility inside the organization. It is almost unanimously agreed that a career includes not just moving up the vertical ladder to more senior positions but also any changes in responsibilities, roles, and relevant training to gain valuable work experience (Andrius & Vladimiras, 2014). To them, career development in the organization is an inseparable part of the human resource management system. In order to adapt to a fast changing environment, organizations need to develop people who can produce, create, and implement new ideas (Higgins & Dillon, 2007). Researchers like Sullivan and Baruch (2009) and Greenhaus and Callanan (2006) have observed that although an individual owns their career, organizations can also actively engage in their employees' career development processes through their career development systems.

Traditionally, career development has been seen as an organizational endeavour in which organization build up policies, processes, elements, and systems to support employees' career development initiatives (Herr, 2004). Conversely, employees are now seeking career growth to get maximum advantage. That is why career development is seen as a continuous process through which

individual employee progresses through the stages characterized by special or unique issues, tasks, and themes now learn how their profession sectors are developing and choose their own goals and development strategies. Career growth has an impact on attempts to increase performance (Alfa, 2018). Therefore, professional development is more than just getting promoted to a better position. It's also about being encouraged or motivated to progress in your role inside an organization. The performance of employees will be impacted by a person's professional success. As to Khan et al. (2016), providing suitable development and training programs to employees can motivate them to enhance their skills and consequently boost their work output. Appropriate career development initiatives can boost workers' productivity.

## **2.2 Components of career development**

Career development is more than just a management duty. It is a multifaceted organisational process that includes individuals, addressing their goals, giving them roles and responsibilities that match their potential, assessing their work, and developing employment positions that support employees' aspirations for professional development (CIPM, 2018). Further components of career development are: education, training and development.

Fadel (2019) asserts that education is thought to be the initial step towards job development. Formal training in the form of degrees, certifications, and classes is one aspect of education. Self-training involves reading books, blogs, and current research in the subject in addition to continuing education through books, courses, and reading. Education is the foundation of a successful career. It is essential to obtain education in order to comprehend the general ideas and an overview of the relevant industry. Education is developing one's abilities and strengths (Nursaimatussaddiya & Cia, 2021). Both formal and informal education can be achieved in the field of careers. Formal career education is acquired by adhering to programmes designed and organised by the department or ministry for staff members to acquire more credentials and experience via instruction in schools that follow a comprehensive curriculum. Non-formal education, on the other hand, refers to knowledge acquired via experience or observation from people from diverse backgrounds in daily life. According to Milkovich and Boudreau (1997), training is the part of the career development process that helps employees grow their skills and talents. It also has a major positive impact on an organization's financial performance (Rehman, 2017). According to Steel et al. (2002) and Aguinis & Kraiger (2008), it is a methodical technique for learning new information or abilities in order to increase employee and organisational effectiveness and growth. Costen and Salazar (2011) state that training equips workers with the information and abilities needed to do activities accurately. Training, according to Georgellis and Lange (2007), provides employees with access to educational resources, courses, and seminars and assists them in making the most of them. Employees are supported in achieving their professional goals and strengthening their loyalty to the company through training and development programmes offered by organisations (Ashar et al., 2013).

The strategies for employee training can be classified as internal and external. Several authors Onah (2008), Lu & Tjosvold (2013) Saks & Gruman (2018) Shuaibu (2020), Spagnoli, (2020) Garavan et al., (2021), Nwankwo, (2022) have identified induction programme, orientation programme, on the job training; coaching, job rotation, in-house training, committee, junior board and workgroup method, vestibule training method, conference and job promotion to be the internal strategies of staff training.

Other essential components of career development includes capability, networking, job experience, and human capacity building according to Owyang (2012), Brearley (2020), Onah (2008), Fadel (2019), Lengkong et al. (2019) and Groot and Molen (2000).

## **2.3 Employee performance**

The calibre of an organization's employees determines how well it can deliver services (Emmanuel & Philip, 2013). Performance, according to Kasmir (2016), is the outcome of a person's job and work behaviour throughout an interval, often one year. It can be assessed in terms of productivity inside the

organisation, work efficiency and quality, and service delivery (Hasibuan, 2012). Bernardin and Russell (1993) hold a similar perspective, viewing performance as an outcome record produced by a certain task or activity within a given time frame. A person's performance is the outcome of his or her ability to complete tasks given to them according to their level of training, experience, sincerity, and time. Workers in the company are hired to carry out certain tasks that will aid in the achievement of the company's declared objective.

Employee performance is the degree to which a worker in a specific organisation fulfils his or her responsibilities in accordance with the standards set out by the organisation (Byar & Rue, 2008). One can quantify and qualify an employee's performance. A person's ability to succeed in reaching a goal is judged in terms of quantity, whereas a person's capacity for making mistakes, self-control, and punctuality are indicators of quality. According to Mangkunegara (2009), working time includes an individual's attendance record, tardiness, and duration of employment from the prior year. Increasing employee capacity and competence has a significant impact on the organization's service efficacy, target attainment, employee production, and efficiency (Efenji, 2023). According to Cascio (1992), an employee's fulfilment of particular responsibilities entrusted to them is referred to as their performance. He went on to say that performance evaluation is challenging in the absence of any measurement guidelines since actual performances are evaluated against pre-established benchmarks. According to Hasibuan (2012) and Novita et al. (2022), performance is the result of the interaction of three key elements: an individual's capacity and motivation for work, their capacity and willingness to understand the rationale for task delegation, and their role in the workplace. The performance of the employee increases with the three aforementioned factors. Performance is done or goods/services are created and offered by an individual or group, according to Lina (2014).

There have to be some performance expectations before claims of underperformance can be made. Reviewing employee performance in relation to established criteria and identifying each person's strengths and shortcomings in terms of their delivery abilities and personal traits are the goals of the employee performance analysis exercise (Goss, 1994). The next step is to do individual assessments and then implement a development plan to create a team that produces outcomes and is more productive.

## **2.4 Dimensions of employee performance**

### **2.4.1 Job performance**

Task performance and contextual performance are two categories used to describe an employee's job performance in the workplace (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993).

**Contextual performance:** Making sure that workers do their jobs well is the most important thing an organisation can do. The ability of employees to participate in activities that enhance the general well-being of the organisation is captured by contextual performance. Contextual performance has been viewed as a crucial component of total job success in recent years (Markus, 2019). According to Borman and Motowidlo (1993), the contextual version comprises many discretionary behaviours, cooperating with co-workers, volunteering for extra work, and being a good organisational citizen.

**Task performance:** This outlines an employee's primary job tasks. It is also known as "in-role prescribed behaviour" (Koopmans et al., 2011) and is evident in the number and quality of particular work outputs as well as work results. Task performance is important since it has to do with generating products and services that are specific to a given profession and necessitates that workers learn and apply fundamental technical abilities.

### **2.4.2 Employee behavioural competencies**

According to Vicki (2020), competence is a quality that a person must possess in order to carry out their work in an efficient manner. A number of applications, such as hiring and selection, training and development, salary evaluations, and performance management, make extensive use of competencies.

The behaviours and attitudes that people are required to exhibit in accordance with their organisational role, as well as the role requirements, form the basis of competency frameworks. These skills typically make up what's known as a competency framework. Following the creation and adoption of a competency framework, people can undergo performance management assessments to ascertain the extent to which they currently possess the competencies and the areas in which they still require improvement (Vicki, 2020).

#### **2.4.3 Goals and targets**

Managers frequently create goals and targets for their staff. These are often in accordance with the specifications outlined in the job description and might be set daily, weekly, or monthly. In order to work efficiently, the staff members anticipate meeting or exceeding their goals. It's critical that whatever objectives or grades you set are realistic and doable. If so, they won't be able to properly inspire the person to get in touch with them (Vicki, 2020). This approach might be beneficial for gauging employee performance since it gives workers a specific goal that is simple to recognise. This reduces the amount of room for doubt. People need to know what their goals are, and if they aren't reaching them, they should talk about why and whether there are any barriers preventing them. If they continuously perform below the expected level, a formal performance management procedure will be initiated (Vicki, 2020).

#### **2.4.4 Organizational service quality**

Organizational service quality is a measure of how an organization delivers its services compared to the expectations of its customers (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). If an employee's work frequently falls short of the desired standard, the organisation will go through a formal performance management procedure wherein they will discuss the difficulties with their work with the person. After that, they ought to get the appropriate instruction and be given a window of time to turn things around before more penalties are applied (Vicki, 2020). Reliability, tangibility, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance are indicators of an organization's quality of service (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

#### **2.4.5 Work efficiency and productivity**

On the other hand, if a worker consistently produces excellent work but does not complete it on time, it will also pose a risk to the company. Analysing work efficiency is frequently employed, for instance, in warehouse environments where employees must choose a predetermined number of products in a predetermined amount of time. When workers are completing their tasks on schedule, this is a useful goal criterion for performance management. Although the idea of performance management can be intimidating, it can be made much simpler for managers and employees when there are precise, quantifiable, and objective standards (Vicki, 2020).

### **2.5 Civil service**

There are several views of the civil service and each has its peculiar vision of what the service is and what it ought to do. According to the 1999 constitution, section 318, sub-section (1) (as amended), "civil service of the Federation", means service of the Federation in a civil capacity of staff of the office of the President, the Vice-President, a ministry or department of the Government of the Federation assigned with the responsibility for any business of the Government of the Federation; while "civil service of the State", means service of the State in a civil capacity as staff of the office of the Governor, the Deputy Governor, a ministry or department of the Government of the State assigned with the responsibility for any business of the government of State (FGN, 1999). In Nigeria, the civil service has grown to be an important instrument for the advancement and development of the country. Among the populace, it has increased efficiency, employment, and loyalty (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1997; Salau et al., 2014). The creation and execution of policies have occupied the Nigerian civil service since the country's inception (Owota & Sibiri, 2022). It is an organisation tasked with carrying out policies and initiatives on behalf of the government. Additionally, government policies and

development programmes were created and carried out by the civil service (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2008).

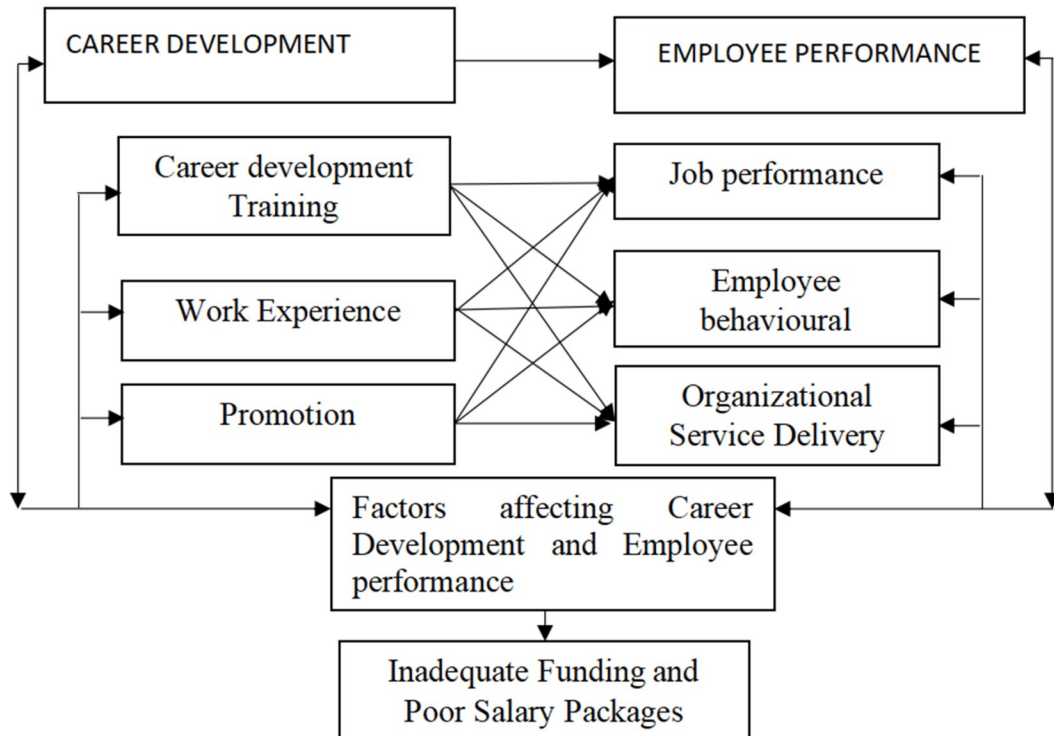


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Source: Odanwu research work, 2023

## 2.6 Career development programmes in the civil service

Since employees are generally optimistic about career development and promotion prospects, organisations use career development programmes to help their employees plan their careers appropriately. According to Rhoades (2015), the government is already making enough progress through a number of initiatives to guarantee that people get the information and abilities they need. Not only can a career development programme help you keep all of your smart, important staff, but it will also lessen the likelihood that you will lose them (Fadel, 2019). Samuel and Hellen (2018) state that certain events are planned to provide staff members with the necessary knowledge, abilities, and attitudes. According to Olorunsola (2000), Lai Wan (2001), and Zin et al. (2013), these career development intervention programmes involve the building of human capacity through workshops, seminars, short courses, mentoring/career coaching, career guidance programmes, job rotation, job enrichment and promotions/transfers, sabbaticals, and short tasks.

All career development initiatives seek to align employees' objectives and desires with the current and future career prospects offered by their organisations (Delbari et al., 2021). Because of this, career development is seen as an essential component of any government service's HRM system (Andrius & Vladimiras, 2014). Organisations gain from career development programmes because they enhance workers' abilities, know-how, and experience. It helps the company as a whole as well as the individual employee. Offering professional development chances makes workers more loyal to the company and discourages them from leaving (Kibui et al., 2014). Employees can refine their skills, increase their competence at work, and succeed professionally inside the organisation with the aid of career

development programmes (Luh-Putu & Sagung, 2020).

Novita et al. (2022) claim that scientific approaches are used to properly organise and arrange career development programmes so they can assist the company's activities both today and in the future. These academics believed that an organisation may enhance employee performance and power structures by implementing career development programmes. They stated that the presence of career development within an organisation can inspire or promote employees' self-readiness to make full use of the chance. A company without career development initiatives risks losing bright staff members (Kekeocha et al., 2022). You will lower the likelihood of losing all of your precious, talented staff members by putting in place a career development programme.

### 2.7 Research hypotheses

This study was guided by these three research hypotheses to enable the researcher to determine the impact of career development on employee performance in the Ebonyi State Civil Service from 2015 to 2022. The hypotheses are stated in null form:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There exists no relationship between career development and employee job performance in the Ebonyi State Civil Service between 2015 and 2022.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: Career development has not adequately impacted employee behavioral competencies (attitude to work) in the Ebonyi State Civil Service within the period under review.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: Funding and salary packages have not adequately affected career development and employee performance in Ebonyi State Civil Service, South-East Nigeria, from 2015-2022.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research designs

The study adopted descriptive research designs. Descriptive research design help to ascertain the nature of a given phenomenon and it is concerned with conditions or relationship that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs, point of view or attitude (Iyogwe, 2002). This design is considered appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to gain a deeper knowledge of the research problems.

### 3.2 Population of the study

This study involved the senior management staff, heads of departments/supervisors, and operations staff. Therefore, the population of this study comprises 3009 of the above staff of the ministries that make up Ebonyi State Civil Service (Personnel Unit, Head of Service, Ebonyi State Civil Service, 2022).

### 3.3 Sample size

This study's sample size is 353. This sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) technique of sample size calculation. A formula that simplifies sample size calculations is given by Yamane (1967). The sample size estimation formula is provided as

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Desired Sample Size

N = Total Population Size (3009)

e = Level of precision (allowable error) that is 5% or 0.05.

Therefore, the sample size estimation is given as:

$$n = \frac{3009}{1 + 3009(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3009}{1 + 3009(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{3009}{1 + 7.52}$$

$$n = \frac{3009}{8.52}$$

$$n = 353$$

Thus, the sample size for this study is 353.

### 3.4 Sample size allocation

To guarantee that every category is represented in the survey, the Rangan Kamaisan proportionate allocation or distribution method was used in the research. The following is the formula:

$$n_s = \frac{N_p \times n}{N}$$

Where:

$n_s$  = Sample size allocated to each unit

$N_p$  = Population size of each unit

$n$  = Total sample size

$N$  = Total population size

Therefore,

For Senior Management Staff:

$$n_s = \frac{203 \times 353}{3009} = 24$$

For the Head of the Department and Supervisors:

$$n_s = \frac{683 \times 353}{3009} = 80$$

For Operation Staff:

$$n_s = \frac{2123 \times 353}{3009} = 249$$

### 3.5 Sampling techniques

The researcher used purposive non-probability sampling to select staff members who took part in this study from the various ministries. This is because the researcher knows the element in the entire civil service population that is relevant to the study. According to Iyigwe (2002), in purposive sampling, the researcher selects elements from the population based on his presumption that they are suitable for the study or representatives of its population.

### 3.6 Sources and methods of data collection

#### 3.6.1 Sources of data collection

Data from both primary and secondary sources will be used in this investigation. The main information will come from field research, questionnaire replies, and in-depth interviews. The secondary data will be produced from published materials, including journal articles, textbooks, newspapers, and government documents, both online and offline.

#### 3.6.2 Methods of data collection

The study will use a self-structured questionnaire and in-depth interview based on the insight from reviewed pieces of literature to collect data from the sampled subjects. The questionnaire, which is a quantitative instrument, will be the major instrument for data collection. The researcher will conduct an in-depth interview (IDI) with the Chief of Staff, Head of Service, Commissioners of the selected ministries.

### 3.7 Validity of instruments of study

The study determined the validity of the instrument using content validity measures. The questionnaire items drafted were presented to three senior lecturers from the fields of Public Administration at the University of Nigeria Nsukka to be scrutinized to ensure that the items accurately represent or measure the information that is being assessed. The observations they raised were duly followed, thus reinforcing the quality of the instrument.

### 3.8 Reliability of instruments of study

A pre-test of the research instrument was carried out using ten (10) staff of Ebonyi State Civil Service. After two weeks, the same instrument was re-administered to the same set of civil servants. The result of the pre-test was tested using the Cronbach alpha reliability test, and a reliability level of 0.98 was obtained, which confirmed the reliability of the instrument.

### 3.9 Methods of data presentation and analysis

A five-point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree was used in measuring the variables raised in the research questions, objectives, and hypotheses. 382 copies of questionnaires will be distributed to the respondents. The data collected was coded and checked for completeness and was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data analysis was performed using International Business Machine (IBM) Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Utilizing descriptive statistics, the results of IBM SPSS were further analysed, interpreted and organized using tables, frequencies and charts. The hypotheses were tested using Chi-Square. The qualitative data were analysed using manual thematic method and note-taking to gather data from in-depth interviews and the results were used to support the data from the questionnaire during the discussion of findings.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1 Relationship between career development and employee job performance in the Ebonyi State Civil Service between 2015 and 2022

Figure 1 shows the respondent's responses to questionnaire items addressing research hypothesis 1, which states that no relationship exists between career development and employee's job performance (timely delivery of services) in the Ebonyi State Civil Service between 2015 and 2022. From questionnaire item one, 120 (34%) respondents strongly agreed that career development has enabled employees to gain job satisfaction and improve their job performance (timely delivery of services) in the Ebonyi State Civil Service system. 150(42.5%) agreed, 9(2.5%) were undecided, 45(12.7%) and 16 (4.5%) of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively. The mean average of 3.9 shows that a greater number of respondents strongly agree that career development has significantly impacted employee job performance. That is to say that career development has enhanced their ability to deliver services timely in the Ebonyi State Civil Service system. Questionnaire item 2 sought to know the respondents' opinions on how their job experiences have enhanced their ability to perform their duties in the Ebonyi State Civil Service during 2015-2022. From the responses, 110(31.2%) and 170(48.2%) respondents strongly agree that through their job experiences, they have developed skills, strategies, and solutions to problems, thereby increasing the efficiency and proficiency of their work performance in the Ebonyi State Civil Service between the period under review. 11(3.1%) were undecided, while 29 (8.2%) and 20(5.7%) disagree and strongly disagree. In questionnaire item 3, the study sought to know how career development coaching has impacted employee implementation of public policies and programs in Ebonyi State Civil Service. From the responses, 90(25.5%) and 99(28%) strongly agree that career development had expanded their responsibilities and opportunities to implement public policies and programs in the Ebonyi State Civil Service. 20(5.7%) were undecided, while 77(21.8%) and 54(15.3%) disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. In questionnaire item 4, the study also sought to determine how acquiring career development training has impacted employee performance.

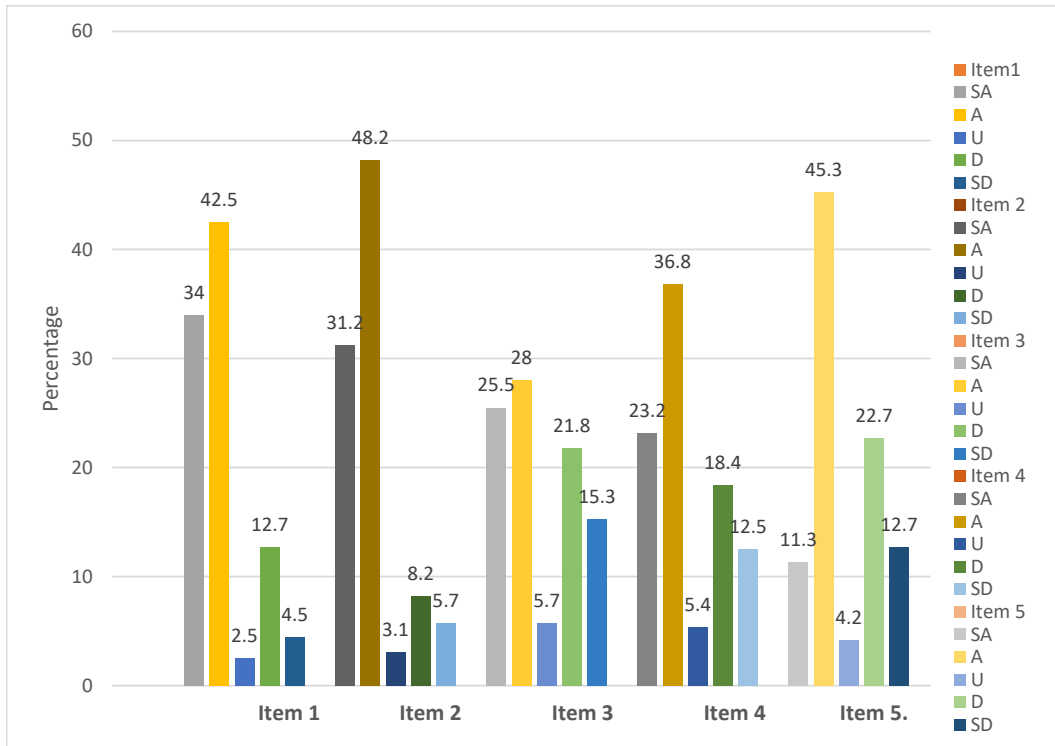


Figure 1 Responses to questionnaire items on hypothesis 1

From the responses, 82(23.2%) respondents strongly agree that they had acquired some level of career development training, improving their communication abilities. 130(36.8%) agree, 19(5.4%) were undecided, 65(18.4%) disagree and 44(12.5%) strongly disagree. The average Mean of 3.41 indicates that acquiring some career development training has the efficacy of improving their abilities to communicate effectively. Questionnaire item 5 also examines the relationship between career development and employees’ time management in the Ebonyi State Civil Service between the periods under review. From the responses, 40 (11.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that through their career advancement, they had gained some level of job satisfaction, improving their capacity for effective time management, and 160(45.3%) agreed. 15(4.2%) were undecided, 80(22.7%) and 45 (12.7%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively.

4.1.1 Test of hypothesis 1

Table 1 Contingency table for the test of hypothesis 1: relationship between career development and employee performance

Options	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly agree	120	68.0	52.0
Agree	150	68.0	820.0
Undecided	9	68.0	-59.0
Disagree	45	68.0	-23.0
Strongly Disagree	16	68.0	-52.0
Total	340		
Chi-Square		237.382 <sup>a</sup>	
Df		4	
Asymp. Sig.		.000	

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 68.0.

#### 4.1.2 Research result

From the computation in Table 1, the Chi-Square Calculated ( $\chi^2$ ) is 237.382a, while the Chi-Square Tabulated ( $\chi^2$ ) is at the expected frequency 68. Thus, the Chi-Square Calculated is greater than the Chi-Square Tabulated. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, we acknowledge a significant relationship between career development and employees' performance in the Ebonyi State Civil Service during the period under review.

From the hypothesis tested and the data analysis generated from questionnaire items that make up hypothesis 1, there is a strong relationship between career development and employee performance in the Ebonyi State Civil Service. Career development in the civil service often involves training programs, workshops, and other opportunities for employees to acquire new skills and knowledge. Employees participating in career development initiatives enhance their abilities and expertise in their respective roles. As a result, their performance improves. Continuous learning and skill development contribute to better job performance and efficient handling of more complex tasks. When interviewed, the interviewee noted that some of the employees who had the opportunity to attend some career development programs now perform better than when they have not participated in the programs. Some employees noted that job experience and on-the-job training have enabled them to acquire knowledge in performing their duties promptly.

Accordingly, employees noted that participating in the Fiscal Transparency, Accountability, and Sustainability (SFTAS) Programme organized by the Public Service Institute of Nigeria (PSIN) on May 17th -20th, 2021, has enabled them to gain knowledge to perform better in their work. Similarly, East Institute for Management Development, in collaboration with Lison Consult Assoc. LTD conducted training workshops on Accounting Skills and Fund Management, Registry and Records Management, Meeting Organization and Management, and Information and Security in March 2021. The workshop had some Ebonyi State Civil Service employees in attendance, and the knowledge they gained encouraged the participants.

Dr Ogbonnaya B. Onwe, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, also participated in the National Training of Trainers Workshop on Quality Care that Jhpieego fully sponsored on August 22-26, 2022. According to him, the skills acquired were impactful. The Industrial Training Fund also conducted a skills development workshop for administrative and personnel officers on the 22nd-24th of March 2022 at ITF Abakaliki Area Office, 3 Ezekuna Crescent, off Nsugbe Street. The employees who were opportune to attend the program noted that the training has enhanced their skills, knowledge, and attitude to carry out their administrative duties. Along the same line, Dr. Nwenyi Okoro A from the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources was nominated to participate in Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa, organized by the Centre for Africa Leadership in Agriculture in Africa (CALA), the program aims to develop leaders through training and exposure. Mr. Okereke, the Director of Administration, Office of the Head of Service, noted that this training dramatically benefits both the Ministry of Agriculture and the participant, enhancing his capacity to perform his duties and motivating him to show more commitment to the organization.

#### 4.2 Funding and salary packages effect on career development and employee performance in Ebonyi State Civil Service from 2015 to 2022

Table 2 Funding and salary packages on employee performance

	Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Q1	Inadequate funding and poor salary packages have limited me from undertaking career advancement training and thus affecting my performance in the Ebonyi State Civil Service between 2015-2022				
	Strongly Agree	145	41.1	42.6	
	Agree	142	40.2	84.4	
	Undecided	2	.6	85.0	
	Disagree	21	5.9	91.2	3.7

Table 2 Funding and salary packages on employee performance(Continued).

	Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
	Strongly Disagree	30	8.5	100.0	
	Total	340	96.3	42.6	
	Missing System	13	3.7		
	Total	353	100.0		
Q2	My salary matches my skills and qualifications and has encouraged my enthusiasm for working in the Ebonyi State Civil Service within the period under review				
	Strongly Agree	25	7.1	7.4	
	Agree	27	7.6	15.3	
	Undecided	2	.6	15.9	
	Disagree	150	42.5	60.0	
	Strongly Disagree	136	38.5	100.0	
	Total	340	96.3		
	Missing System	13	3.7		
	Total	353	100		1.98
Q3	Worrying about my poor salary has caused distraction, lack of concentration and focus, and therefore affected my overall job performance in Ebonyi State Civil Service 2015-2022				
	Strongly Agree	126	35.7	37.1	
	Agree	149	42.2	80.9	
	Undecided	13	3.7	84.7	
	Disagree	25	7.1	92.1	
	Strongly Disagree	27	7.6	100.0	
	Total	340	96.3		
	Missing System	13	3.7		
	Total	353	100.0		3.0
Q4	Worrying about my poor salary has caused distraction, lack of concentration and focus, and therefore affected my overall job performance in Ebonyi State Civil Service 2015-2022.				
	Strongly Agree	140	39.7	41.2	
	Agree	155	43.9	86.8	
	Undecided	8	2.3	89.1	
	Disagree	25	7.1	96.5	
	Strongly Disagree	12	3.4	100.0	
	Total	340	96.3		
	Missing System	13	3.7		
	Total	353	100		4.1
Q5	I can leave Ebonyi State civil service if I see another organization that can offer me higher salary and sponsor me for career advancement programmes				
	Strongly Agree	120	34.0	35.3	
	Agree	142	40.2	77.1	
	Undecided	11	3.1	80.3	
	Disagree	50	14.2	95.0	
	Strongly Disagree	17	4.8	100.0	
	Total	340	96.3		
	MissingSystem	13	3.7		
	Total	353	100.0		3.8

Source: Odanwu field survey, 2023

Table 2 shows the respondents' opinions on the questionnaire items addressing hypothesis which states that inadequate funding and poor salary packages have not adequately affected career development and employee performance in Ebonyi State Civil Service from 2015-2022. From the responses to questionnaire item, 145(41.1%) respondents strongly agree that inadequate funding and poor salary packages have limited them from undertaking career advancement training and thus affected their performance in the Ebonyi State Civil Service from 2015-2022, 142(40.2%) agree. 2

(.6%) were undecided, 21(5.9%), disagree and 30(8.5%) strongly disagree. The mean average point of 4.0 indicates that inadequate funding of training programs and poor salary packages have demotivated the employees from carrying out their duties in the Ebonyi State Civil Service.

Item 2 shows the respondents' opinions on whether their salaries match my skills and qualifications and how it has impacted their enthusiasm to work in the Ebonyi State Civil Service within the period under review. From the responses, 25(7.1%) respondents strongly agree that their salaries match their skills and qualifications, encouraging their enthusiasm for working in the Ebonyi State Civil Service within the period under review. 27(7.6%) agree, 2(.6%) were undecided, 150(42.5%) disagree, and 136 (38.5%) strongly disagree respectively. The mean average point of 1.98 indicates that employees' salaries do not match their skills and qualifications and has encouraged their enthusiasm for working in the Ebonyi State Civil Service within the period under review.

Questionnaire item 3 sought to know if the inadequate salaries have contributed to the employees' poor attitude toward work in the Ebonyi State civil service from 2015 to 2022. The responses show that the respondents responded affirmatively to the questionnaire item. Hence, 126(35.7%) strongly agree, 149(42.2%) agree, 13(3.7%) were undecided, 25(7.1%) disagree and 27(7.6%) strongly disagree. The mean average point of 3.0 indicates strong responses that poor salaries contribute to why employees have a poor attitude of not going to work regularly in the Ebonyi state civil service

The average mean point of 4.1 in Table 2 indicates that most employees are worried about their salaries and that worrying about their poor salaries has caused distractions, lack of concentration, and focus, affecting their overall job performance in Ebonyi State Civil Service 2015-2022. Hence, 140 (39.7%) respondents strongly, 155(43.9%) agreed, 8(2.3%) were undecided, 25(7.1%) disagree and 12 (3.4%) strongly disagree.

Responses to questionnaire item 5 in Table 2 that 120(34.3%) respondents strongly agree that they could leave Ebonyi State Civil Service if they saw another organization that could offer them a higher salary and sponsor them for career advancement programs. 142(40%) agree, 11 (3.1%) were undecided, 50(14.2%) disagree, and 17 (4.8%) strongly disagree that they would leave the Ebonyi State civil service. The average mean of 3.8 indicates that most employees would leave the state civil service if they find better opportunities in other organizations.

**Table 3** Contingency table for the test of hypothesis 2:  
funding and salary packages effect on employees' performance

Options	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly agree	145	68.0	77.0
Agree	142	68.0	74.0
Undecided	2	68.0	-67.0
Disagree	21	68.0	-44.0
Strongly Disagree	30	68.0	-38.0
Total	370		
Chi-Square		285.500 <sup>a</sup>	
DF		4	
Asymp. Sig.		.000	

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 68.0

Odanwu's field work, 2023

#### 4.2.1 Research result

The computation in Table 3 above shows that the Chi-Square calculated ( $\chi^2_{2c}$ ) is 285.500<sup>a</sup> while the Chi-Square tabulated ( $\chi^2_{2t}$ ) is 68. Therefore, we accept the alternate hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. This means that inadequate funding and poor salary packages have adequately affected employees' performance in the Ebonyi State Civil Service during the period under review.

The result of this hypothesis, as presented, shows that poor salaries and inadequate funding have

hindered the employees' participation in career development programmes such as conferences, seminars, workshops, and further education and have affected their performance in the Ebonyi State Civil Service. Let us further substantiate this result with the following data generated from the field.

The Institute of Professional Managers and Administrators of Nigeria (IPMA), in January 2021, invited the employees of the State Civil Service to attend their year 2021 Performance Improvement National Workshops and Capacity Building Seminars. The ones that would impact the civil servants were tagged Advance Management and Administration, Breaking Barriers and Organizational Limits, scheduled to take place from April 8<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and Effective Human Resources Management, Employee-employee Relations, Motivation and Control for Higher Productivity, expected to hold from June 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> July 9<sup>th</sup> 2021. The participants are to pay registration fees of 80,000 and 75,000 each, respectively. However, no participant was funded or sponsored to participate in this training by the state civil service based on funds.

The Nigeria Institute of Public Relations on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021, invited participants from Ebonyi State Civil Service to attend their 2021 Performance Improvement National Workshops and Training Programs: Registry Management and Clerical Operation for Effective Workflow; The Duties, Roles, and Responsibilities of Secretaries and Executive Assistants in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Effective Document Administration, Mails Handling and Confidentiality of Sensitive Information and Records Keeping; Proficiency in Office Management, Leadership and Administration Skills; Discipline and Routine Management Principles for Secretarial Administrative and Executive Assistants; Modern Office Technology and Information Management and Administration Skills; and Effective Leadership, People , Management and Supervision for Peak Performance. Each of these programs was to cost 75000, 80,000, 85,000, 85,000, 85,000, 85,000, 85,000, and 85,000, respectively. The programs were expected to last from February 2021 to October 2021 at different schedules. However, no employee participated in the programs for not being funded.

The Institute of Confidential Secretaries of Nigeria, on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, invited employees to participate in year 2021 training, workshops, and seminars on Information and Communication Technology Management, Internet and Networking Skills Towards Proficiency in Management Leadership and Administration Skills; Cloud Computing, Mastering the Computers, the Internet and Networking Skills at the rate of 85,000, 80,000, 75,000, 75,000 and 85,000 respectively for each participant. The trainings were to be held from February 2021 to August 2021 at different intervals. However, none of the employees was funded to participate in the training.

Responding to the in-depth interview questions, some respondents noted that insufficient funding has hindered the provision of modern technology which serves as necessary resources and tools for employees to effectively perform their jobs. The respondents noted that they still use outdated technology, equipment, or software in discharging their responsibilities. "When employees do not have access to the resources they need, it can hinder their productivity and limit their ability to deliver high-quality work" one of the permanent secretaries who pledged anonymity stated.

## **5. Conclusion and recommendations**

The result of this study has revealed that career development and employee performance are closely related and play a significant role in the success of organizations. When employees feel that they are growing and developing in their careers, they are more motivated, engaged, and committed to their work, this, in turn, leads to improved performance and productivity.

However, irrespective of the career development crucial role in enhancing employee performance in the civil service, the study has revealed that inadequate funding of career development programmes has led to a lack of investment in employee welfare and benefits in Ebonyi State Civil Service. Many employees do not have job satisfaction and morale to do their work. This has negatively impacted their motivation and commitment to their work and thus affected their performance. The respondents noted that inadequate salaries have increased stress levels, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction. "When

employees are overburdened with work, their performance suffers as they struggle to maintain a work-life balance”. Other respondents to the personal interview noted that financial worries have consumed their thoughts and affected their ability to focus on their work, resulting in decreased productivity and performance. Those employees who feel that their salary is insufficient for the work they do, have decreased engagement and commitment to their work.

The finding shows that inadequate compensation in the Ebonyi State Civil Service has driven some employees to seek better-paying opportunities elsewhere, resulting in higher turnover rates. This can be detrimental to career development as employees may have to start over in a new organization and may miss out on long-term growth opportunities within their current workplace. By providing learning opportunities, promoting job satisfaction, offering advancement prospects, and retaining talented individuals, organizations can create an environment that encourages high performance and continuous improvement. Therefore, the study recommends that Ebonyi State Civil Service should enhance the career development opportunities within the civil service to enable the employees to benefit and utilize them to improve performance. Ebonyi State Civil Service should invest in their employees' growth by providing training programmes, mentoring, coaching, and opportunities for promotions for the employees. To mitigate the impact of inadequate funding on career development and employee performance, Ebonyi State Civil Service should explore alternative funding sources, seek partnerships or grants from ITF and other foreign non-governmental organizations, and prioritize budget allocations for employee training and resources. Additionally, clear communication about the financial constraints and efforts to address them can help manage employee expectations and maintain morale.

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